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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA. NSC FOR SHAPIRO/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/22/2024  
TAGS: [IS](#) [KDEM](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)  
SUBJECT: PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FAILS TO RESOLVE OUTSTANDING  
ISSUES FOR FATAH SIXTH GENERAL CONGRESS

REF: 08 JERUSALEM 1410

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. Fatah sources told ConGen that the Preparatory Committee for the Fatah Sixth General Congress made no significant progress during February 3-4 meetings in Amman. Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC) member Muhammad al-Madani said the meetings did not resolve any of the three key questions about the Congress: location, date, or participation. The Committee tentatively decided to hold the Congress outside the Palestinian territories, pending input from the Governments of Jordan and Egypt; however, President Abbas still wants the Congress held in the West Bank. Most Committee members said the Congress should be postponed until after Fatah-Hamas reconciliation, although Abbas wants it held in the next few weeks. The Committee tentatively approved a list of 1,500 delegates to the Congress, but decided not to share a list with Abbas, fearing he would convene the Congress without Fatah Central Committee (FCC) approval. End Summary.

VENUE: TENTATIVE DECISION TO HOLD CONGRESS  
OUTSIDE THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES  
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12. (C) In February 3-4 meetings in Amman, members of the Preparatory Committee for the Fatah Sixth General Congress tentatively agreed that the Congress should be held outside the Palestinian territories to accommodate delegates who are unwilling or unable to enter the West Bank. The Committee decided to request permission from the Governments of Egypt and Jordan to hold the Congress in al-Arish in Egypt or Amman or the Dead Sea in Jordan. FRC member Muhammad al-Madani told PolSpec February 4 that most FCC and FRC members favored this decision despite the preference of President Abbas and grassroots West Bank leaders to hold the Congress in the West Bank.

TIMING REMAINS UNCLEAR  
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13. (C) Committee members also tentatively agreed the Congress should be within a month of approval from the GoE or GoJ. However, according to al-Madani, Abbas believes that the Congress should be as soon as possible. Al-Madani said that, during a January 30 FCC meeting in Ramallah, Abbas threatened to resign if the FCC did not announce the Congress within three weeks, sparking an angry dispute with FCC member Nassir Yusuf, who hurled profanities at Abbas. Committee members in Amman, however, argued that the Congress should follow Fatah-Hamas reconciliation, since it could otherwise exacerbate fissures within Fatah. They also argued that Fatah present a united face to the new U.S. and Israeli administrations. Al-Madani told PolSpec that the Committee did not resolve the timing at the Amman meeting and will probably need to reconvene on this issue.

PARTICIPATION: DELEGATE LISTS WITHHELD FROM ABBAS

14. (C) Preparatory Committee members Jamal al-Dik and Yassir Masri told PolSpec that the Committee decided that 1,500 delegates should attend the General Congress, although FCC members Ahmad Qurei (Abu Ala'a) and Hakam Balawi pressed for 2,000. FRC member Adnan Samara and FCC member Nassir Yusuf said the Committee tentatively approved the delegate list, but will not to share it with Abbas until after the FCC and FRC approve it. Samara said Committee members feared that Abbas would use the list to convene the Congress in the West Bank quickly without FCC approval. FRC member Azzam al-Ahmad said Committee members also queried whether Hamas would allow Fatah members from Gaza to participate in the Congress.

AL-MADANI: CONGRESS NO CLOSER  
TO OCCURRING THAN PREVIOUSLY

15. (C) Muhammad al-Madani told PolSpec that the Committee resolved none of the three key obstacles to the Congress. He said Committee discussions were heated and argumentative, and decisions are all subject to review by the FRC (expected to meet February 15-16) and the FCC. In a recent meeting, al-Madani said, Abbas tasked Hakam Balawi to prepare a list of possible new FCC members. Balawi reportedly refused, fearing a purge of current FCC members.

WALLES